824 [281] yellow fruit of an "embway" bush an astringent is made for depilation of hides.

[251] Butter is preserved and "perfumed" by boiling it with the leaves of the "ades" (myrtle) bush.

• [263] Wild spice - used to flavor the flat taste of porridge during the long lenten fasting season, is obtained from a daisy-like flower "komär" with strongly scented foliage resembling camomile. But because it is "wild" it is despised at other times.

[262] Wild oil - in case of crop failure, "suf", sunflower seed (Carthamus tinctorus) is crushed for edible oil.

222 554 The element of shame at collecting rather than planting thus affects only those items directly connected with food consumption. The reason is that this would class the consumer with one who "hunts for subsistence", and such hunters are considered at the lowest social stratum.

Therefore, very little fruit is consumed by the Amhara, in view of the absence of any pattern of planting orchards. Even the wiesspread fig tree, planted for ages past for its broad shade, and used by ancient kings and judges when judging legal cases, is largely used for food only by children, ex-slaves and birds. Among the wild fruit consumed by these groups, are:

wild cherry - "gaba", a spiny tree with small fruit.

wild orange - "koshäm" (rumex abissinica), with sour fruit.

wild mulberry - "enjoriya", resembled blackberry, grows along rivers.

"gämärro" - (Capparis tomentosa), with edible red fruit.

243 patient oxen. If the farmer has no ex-slave retainers, his wife may help in the harvest. Even young boys help, particularly in protecting crops. The direction of the breeze [461] is carefully observed before winnowing. Work proceeds from sunrise to sundown (from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M.), with a rest from noon to 3 P.M., the hottest time of the day. At that time the women bring barley beer, enjara bread, and a spe- [263] cial condiment prepared from crushed "nug" oilseeds called "anäbabär".

Threshing by sticks instead of oxen is done in harvest of the "nug" and this may require some additional helpers.

241 262 Oil plants are cultivated and of considerable importance in the diet. They are considered field crops rather than garden crops:

"nug" (Guizotia abyssinica), the black Niger Seed, which is the most used vegetable oil of the Amhara. Travellers take it along, mixed with spices, as a staple. It is used in many items of diet. After crushing, the oil cakes are used for fuel (not fodder).

Flax seed (Linum usitatissimum), called "talba", the second most common oilseed, of light brown color, consumed in similar ways and in drinks. It is not raised for the fiber, which is considered fodder or fuel.

Castor bean (Ricinus communis), called "gulgwas" or "qachma". This is not a field crop as much as [281] nug and talba, and not as much of a staple. Tanners use it for lubrication of skins. The emperor has urged increased production, but there

244 in northern Abyssinia.

[263] Bärbäre is the generic name for the red spicy pepper, a major ingredient of wot, and the most important item in the kitchen garden. The strongest kind is called "mitmitta" or "sätita" and because it is grown in Begemdir it is often called "Gondar bärbärey". The smaller the pod, the stronger the pepper.

Gesho, the leaf used as fermenting agent in beer and mead, grows on a bush which is a garden crop.

Ades, another leafy garden crop is grown in a wind-

[302] protected area, fenced in; used to purify butter in boiling, especially for use in women's hairdo, for they believe the odor of it is irresistible to men.

Gwaya, a major forage crop of the legume family, is grown as scarcity fodder but contact with it is believed dangerous to humans.

245 Lemons, very small, are grown in a scattered fashion, the only fruit so raised.

Viticulture is a riddle. Grape growing is not in evidence any more among Amhara peasants, but there are local traditions that up to a century ago grapes were grown, e.g. in the worada (district) of "yäkämkäm qaroda", east of Lake Tana. The name "woyna dega" is derived from the wine-growing, intermediate level of topography. It may have been imported by the Portuguese, or may have been much older. Nowadays

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

252 are raised in the housewife's kitchen garden. Every hus-
262 band of pride claims to be able to distinguish the wot of his wife. Among spices used are:

263 Ethiopian spices, raised by Amhara:
278

"Tena Adam" (lit. health of Adam), very aromatic. Important medicine against buda spirit (evil eye). This is Rue (Ruta graveolens, Ruta hortensis).

Fenugreek (Trigonella Foenumgroccum), called "Abush"

Coriander (Coriandrum sativum), "dembelal". Cheaper than "bärbäre and used to replace it.

Sweet Basil (Ocinum Basilicum), called "bäsobela" or "zäqa qebye"

Bärbäre, the all-important red peppery major garden crop.

Ginger, called "zendjebel". It is used unscraped.

273 Caraway seed (Carum carvi) called "enselal", also used to make "araqi" intoxicant drink.

"Abusda", a dark seed resembling nug. Also called "tequr azmud".

Mustard seed, called "shenfa", ground to condiment.

Thyme, called "azmud", in light and dark varieties. Wild Thyme, "tosen".

Garlic, called "näch shenkurt" (lit. white onion).

Spices used by Amhara, but bought on market, including those of Yemen importation:

Cardamon, called "korärima". (Elettaria paradise).

Saffron (Crocus sativus), called "erd", used to add golden orange color to reddish "wot".

Cumin (Cuminium cynisum), called "kamun".

263 "afär kochär" resembling nutmeg.

Capsicum (Cayenne Pepper), possibly introduced by the Portuguese. Called "qundo bärbäre".

252 262 263 A number of these spices are pre-mixed, some added later to the wot. A mixture of bärbäre powder, a salt called "duddus", and garlic, called "awazé", is kept as a staple and also carried by travellers. Vegetables such as cabbage ("gomänzär") and pumpkin slices ("dubba)" are boiled in the "wät". Sesame seed ("sälit", Sesamum indicum) add purplish spots of oil content to the wot. Aroma is added by "senbul" (Spica celtica), expensive and therefore rare.

The most common wot is "qay wät". Chick-peas are pre-fried with red onion. Water, mashed red pepper ("delleh") and butter are added, stirred and heated. Finely sliced meat is then added, and black spice (tequr azmud) is sprayed over the boiling mixture. More water is added and stirring continues. . Some add a bit of barley beer, others pea flour.

When fresh beef is used on Sundays or at special feasts, the red pepper wot is called "zegen wot". The meat is lightly boiled, and minced; onions are minced and slowly roasted, and the whole is boiled with pre-roasted fenugreek spice, and with red barbare pepper. Then butter is added. When this is well cooked, and the host can afford it, the following spices are added: white azmud ("näch azmud"), black azmud (both thyme); ginger; sweet basil; cardamon seed. After cooking, capsicum is sprinkled over the settling stew, and other spices according to individual preference.

252 262 nels, or crushed and baked into a cake with nug or linseed oil. The porridge of non-fast times is called "genfo". It is made of crushed wheat, barley, butter and curdled milk. In fast times nug and linseed are substituted for [272] the forbidden butter and milk. A fast drink consists of tyeff flour boiled in salt water, called "Mug".

Other religious food taboos include the pig, which is never raised, except for European's use. This taboo dates back to Judaism and the Old Testament.

Every householder usually has a supply of roasted kernels "qolo" available in case unexpected guests or kin come to visit, a frequent occurrence. The pattern of "qolo" is very similar to that of a linguistically equivalent concept in Yemen. The Amhara makes it mostly of barley, "gebs qolo", but also of shembera and of maize.

[263] Condiments taken along on trips include an oily paste made of nug or linseed. When this is also spiced, salted, or mixed with honey, it is called "chelqa". It [272] resembles a gummy porridge. The traveller can mix it with water and instantly have a drink which is regarded not only as thirst-quenching, but also as strength-giving. However, no one claims that the taste is good.

264 There are two major meals per day: midday lunch, a light meal, though it may feature both "enjära" and "wot"; and the heavier supper, "erät", the main meal consumed in the cool of the early evening around the hearth of the hut, with bread, meat stew, barley beer and condiments. Breakfast as such is not eaten, except for a handful of roasted barley, and, if the household can afford it, black coffee.

252 Butter is made in a large gourd ("gurna"), plugged with a wooden prop. The housewife shakes this back and forth, much like Middle Eastern nomads shake it in skins. The butter that results resembles Indian ghee, and is called, at this stage, "gorännä". For human consumption it is then usually boiled with spices, especially bärbärey, but not with salt. To cure it further in order to make it sweet, delay rancidity, etc., butter (qebyē) is further boiled with one or several of the following spices in the process known as "yäqebyē mantäriya", "yäqebyē anätatär":

263

bark of ginger	- quaräfa zenjebel
cardamon seeds	- korärima
thyme	- azmud
garlic	- näch shenkurt
sweet basil	- bäsobela
saffron	- erd
wild thyme	- tosen

302 Since most of these spices are expensive, butter intended for ornamental pomade of women's hair is boiled instead with leaves of the "ades" bush, which grows wild. This process is "ades qernefad".

273 The most important, daily drink is tälla, the barley beer brewed by the housewife. It is little different, basically, from other African barley beers. Men almost never drink water (though the barley beer may be very weak), partly due to their fondness for "sweet", i.e. only slightly fermented beer. After three days of storage, the Amhara begin to complain that it is "too bitter", and let the women drink it up.

462 processing tasks of the women also include the prepara-
251 tion of staples of the pantry, to be ready for immediate use when her other tasks have left her no time. The red pepper ("bärbäre") is preserved and readied in the form of a paste, by grinding it, adding water and salt, plus a bit of onion. This paste, called "delleh"or "delleha" can then be used in wot, or to spice butter to be smeared on "enjära" bread, or mixed with oily nug paste and carried as a condiment and staple on travel. Another prepared spice condiment used by travellers is a dry mixture of spices, salt and "shero" (ground peas), called "meten". Butter may be processed by boiling it with pepper, or with the small yellow root of a rhubarb called "mäqmäqo" (Rumex abyssinicus), which is also used as a medicine against tuberculosis.

462 Fetching and producing materials for fuel is a major
237 female occupation, though left to young girls when avail-
572 able. A special supply of dried cowdung is prepared for the rainy season, beginning right after Easter when the intermittent light rains are expected soon. Donkey and horse manure, "fanday", are not used by the proud Amhhara, but cattle dung is flattened between the palms of women, dried in the sun, piled into tall heaps right next to the hut, then covered with a protective mask of mud and fresh dung. It is also women's task to watch the hearth fire in the evening, to check that it is covered with hot ashes over glowing embers, so that it will not go out and leave the hut chilly, on the one hand, but not burn so brightly that it might set fire to the hut.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

Christians will not touch meat unless it is killed by
784 one of themselves, nor will Moslems eat any which has
795 been killed by a Christian. We had one Moslem with us when we were on trek, and as he would not eat the ox which my other men had killed he bought a whole sheep for himself, and killed and ate it himself; none of the other men would touch an atom of it, even when their own supply ran out and they had no meat at all.

262 Of course the comparatively high price of meat (for
252 an Abyssinian) prevents the too frequent consumption of *broundo* amongst the people, and their tastes in everyday food are simple. Bread is their mainstay. This is found in many varieties; some of it soft, slightly sour in taste, and pale brown in colour; the most popular is of flour made from *teff* or millet seed, mixed to a thick paste with water and then poured into a large rough slightly concave iron receptacle and cooked over an open fire, without grease or fat of any kind. When finished this bread takes the form and aspect of large pancakes, twelve to eighteen inches in diameter, and is very good, especially when eaten with jam or butter; we always ate it ourselves when on trek. The native eats with it a kind of mash of lentils or dried peas, ground and cooked, and mixed with butter and a very hot red sauce which is produced from the chilli; this latter is very widely cultivated in several varieties all over the country.

263 The amount of pepper that is put into their cooked dishes is as a rule disastrous to the European palate at the first time of trying, and how they can swallow the fiery compounds that they do passes my comprehension —their tongues and palates must be made of leather.

All food, including meat, is eaten with the fingers amongst all classes, a piece of bread being broken off,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

To make me forget you, this medicine is right:
Food and water, sleep and the night.

• • •

Love and porridge must be taken while hot;
Once cool, those who would taste are a lot.

• • •

The *ĭnjarā* I have, my lass;
I wait for you the *wat** to pass.†

• • •

Your father and your mother have vowed to keep from meat;
But you, their very daughter, innards do you eat.‡

Eating and drinking provide expressive symbolism in social interaction as well as in verse. They form the primary axis of social life among the Amhara. The exchange of *gurshā* is but a specialized form of the general pattern of expressing sociability through feeding and being fed. Camaraderie consists to a large extent of eating from the same *ĭnjarā* basket, and the etymology of the word for "friend," *bălĭnjarā*, is the same as that for the English "companion," someone with whom one shares bread. At any indoor gathering barley beer is served continuously. The visit of a guest at any time of day calls for "a little coffee," a euphemism for as much food and drink as the host can command. In some Amhara areas a special kind of spirit, the *ţonĭn*, is assigned the specific task of punishing persons who infringe the etiquette of dispensing and receiving food.[12]

From this it is but a short step to politics and morals. The production of large banquets is one of the essential arts of government in Abyssinia—*panem*, if not *circenses*. The stature of a big man depends partly upon the number of persons who customarily dine at his expense. A man's Christianity, moreover, is judged by his generosity in feeding others, a virtue that is eulogized at times by parading his *ĭnjarā* baskets around the field. A truly Christian Amhara is known by the regularity and scale with which he prepares memorial feasts for his departed kin, drinks in some religious fraternal association, and holds an annual feast (*zĭkĕr*) in which food is distributed to the poor.

Oral activity is prominent, moreover, not only as a primary source of

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* *Wat* is the sauce in which the *Injarā* is dipped.

† The gold meaning is: "I'll wait for you until the others leave."

‡ "To eat someone's innards" is an idiom meaning: "to make him fall in love." The gold meaning is thus: "You made me love you."